



**INDONESIA:
ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND HEALTH
HIGHLIGHTS
SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER 2006**

Summary:

- On November 22, following three years of bilateral negotiations, the Government of Indonesia (GOI) welcomed home forty-eight orangutans from Thailand.
- Minister of Health Dr. Siti Fadilah Supari announced plans on November 13 to make Indonesian villages self sufficient in health care services and disaster relief.
- On November 13, USDA Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth and Ministry of Forestry (MOF) Secretary General Boen Purnama signed a Letter of Intent on cooperation in sustainable forest management.
- In separate incidents in November and August 2006, wild elephants damaged Sumatra farms and palm oil plantations in an attempt to find food.
- Mount Merapi became active again on November 21, producing hot clouds, lava falls, and tremors.
- On October 18, the Ministry of Environment urged the Jakarta city administration to stop activities associated with the controversial “Jakarta Bay Project.”
- On September 11, Health Minister Supari issued a ministerial decree lowering consumer prices for more than 450 drugs. On September 9, a trash slide at the Bantar Gebang dumpsite in the Jakarta suburb of Bekasi, killed three people and injured others.
- On September 19, the Ministry of Forestry announced that a research team discovered new species in Cendrawasih Bay and the Fak-Fak-Kaimana locality in Papua Province.
- On September 12-13, the U.S. Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) program jointly sponsored with several Indonesian organizations a two-day Coastal Community Resilience workshop in Jakarta. Indonesia hosted the Sixth Asia Forest Partnership (AFP) meeting on September 6-8 in Yogyakarta.

Lost Orangutans Returned Home

On November 22, following three years of bilateral negotiations and extensive lobbying on the part of environmental organizations, the GOI received forty-eight orangutans (*Pongo Pygmaeus*) from Thailand. The orangutans were victims of illegal trafficking, and the Chiang Mai Night Safari had forced the endangered animals to perform in shows. Seven of the repatriated orangutans reportedly have contracted hepatitis. The Indonesian Air Force provided a military aircraft, modified to meet biosecurity and biosafety standards, for the orangutan’s return flight. First Lady Kristiani Herawati Yudhoyono

and several high-ranking officials, including Minister of Forestry M.S. Kaban, State Minister of Environment Rachmat Witoelar and Thailand's Ambassador to Indonesia Atchara Sariputra greeted the orangutans at Halim Perdana Kusumah airport in Jakarta. Once in Indonesia, the GOI flew the orangutans to Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Reintroduction Center in Central Kalimantan Province to undergo quarantine and rehabilitation before they are released into the wild. Indonesia's 1990 Conservation Law forbids individuals to catch, own or sell endangered animals, alive or dead. Violators can receive a maximum sentence of five years in jail and a fine of Rp. 100 million (USD 11,000). However, wildlife experts say that limited enforcement of the law has allowed illegal trade in endangered species to continue.

Ministry of Health Announces Village Health Program

On November 13, in commemoration of the 42nd National Health Day, Minister of Health Dr. Siti Fadilah Supari announced plans to introduce a nationwide program to make villages self sufficient in providing health care services and disaster relief. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono will launch the "Desa Siaga" program in Lumajang Regency, East Java Province in December 2006. Under the program, each village will have at least one health center (Poskesdes) and one community development program (Gerbangmas). The program will encourage the villages to conduct simple surveillance of contagious diseases; provide basic medical and disaster relief services; promote health, nutrition and sanitation; and supply health alerts for emerging disease outbreaks. President Yudhoyono also will officially announce plans to create Regional Centers for Health Crisis and Natural Disaster Management in nine provinces in December, including North Sumatra, South Sumatra, DKI Jakarta, Central Java, East Java, South Kalimantan, Bali, North Sulawesi, and South Sulawesi.

U.S. Forest Service and MOF Sign Letter of Intent

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Chief Dale Bosworth visited Indonesia November 13-16 to view forest rehabilitation programs and USAID environmental programs and hold consultations with the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry (MOF). During his visit, Bosworth and MOF Secretary General Dr. Boen Purnama signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) on sustainable forest management. The LOI formalizes a desire by both parties to continue their long-standing cooperation on forest conservation, which includes previous agreements in 1992 and 1998. Under the LOI, the USFS and MOF agreed to cooperate in promoting protection, conservation and sustainable use of forest resources and to strengthen the capacity of sustainable forest management in Indonesia.

Elephants Strike Back in Jambi and Riau

During the last week of November 2006, press reports indicated that a group of wild elephants destroyed hundreds of hectares of palm oil trees in Tebo regency, Jambi Province as they charged through neighboring farms and palm oil plantations in an attempt to find food. Forest and land fires had destroyed much of the elephants' natural habitat. In August 2006, elephants also damaged local farms in four villages and 145

hectares of palm oil plantation in Pelelawan Regency, Riau Province. Pelawan Regency officials estimate that damages may run as high as Rp. 200 million (USD 22,000). Nuchalis Fadli, Coordinator of Human-Elephant Conflict Prevention of World Wild Life Riau, explained that since 2003 the cumulative encroachment by villagers, and fires, has seriously eroded the elephants' habitat.

Mount Merapi Still a Threat to Yogyakarta Area

On November 21, Mount Merapi became active again, producing nine hot clouds, and dozens of lava falls and tremors. At the same time, cold lava flowed close to residential sections of the Jambu Subdistrict of Kapuhardjo Village, Sleman-Yogyakarta. Head of the Mount Merapi Section of the Volcano Research and Technology Development Agency (BPPTK) Subandriyo blamed high rainfall for triggering the renewed activity. He also noted that the eruption process is likely to continue and warned citizens to remain alert to possible new flows. The Meteorology and Geophysical Agency (BMG) predicted that rainfall in Yogyakarta and surrounding areas would increase further by the end of November 2006, potentially triggering additional volcanic activity.

Trouble for Controversial Jakarta Bay Project

On October 18, Hermien Rosita, the Deputy Assistant Minister for Environmental Assessment at the Ministry of Environment, urged the Jakarta city administration to stop the controversial Jakarta Bay Project and respect an ongoing Supreme Court examination of an environmental impact analysis prepared on the project. The Ministry and environmental activists argue that the reclamation project will cause flooding, pollution, the destruction of fisheries, mangrove areas and coral reefs, and the displacement of thousands of residents living in coastal areas. The project originates from Presidential Decree 52/1995 and Jakarta Regional Regulation (PERDA) No. 6/1999 in which the GOI recommends using an approximately 10.4 mile stretch of the north Jakarta coastline to build industrial parks, office buildings and accommodations for up to 1.2 million residents. Environmentalists argue that existing waste volume already overburdens municipal waste management systems. The city plans to use land sales and private sector sources to fund this project.

GOI Decreases Generic Medicines Prices

On September 11, Health Minister Siti Fadilah Supari issued Ministry of Health (MOH) Decree 720/2006 aimed at sharply lowering consumer prices of 458 drug items starting October 1. For example, the decree lowered the price of a cholesterol-lowering drug previously offered at USD 25 for 30 tablets to USD 3 for the same quantity. Previously, MOH Decree 487/2006 mandated decreases in the price of an additional 85 common generic drugs. The MOH considers the price reductions to be an important step toward improving basic health services, especially in public health service centers (puskesmas), by making drugs more affordable. Both the Ministry of Health and the Indonesia Pharmaceutical Association (GP Farmasi) agreed to the new drug prices. According to GP Farmasi head Anthony Sunaryo reducing drug prices according to the decree would

be one of the organization's "commitments to the people." However, Sunaryo expressed the hope that the Government would consider reducing the 10% value added tax applied to drug sales.

Killer Trash Claims Three Victims

On September 9, a trash slide at the Bantar Gebang dumpsite in the Jakarta suburb of Bekasi killed three people scavenging at the site and injured others. The sanitary landfill receives 6,000 tons of waste from Jakarta daily. A report from the Bekasi Office of Environmental Management in April 2006 showed that the Bantar Gebang dumpsite has nine zones, but only three were active and refuse in each zone was already piled 3-6 meters above the 12-meter standard. This overflow significantly heightens the possibility of future dump slides. The Head of DKI Jakarta Sanitation Office, Mr. Rama Budi, announced that the deaths were accidental and stated that the dumpsite management, PT Patriot Bangkit Bekasi, will assume responsibility for the tragedy.

Joint Expedition Finds New Species in Papua

On September 19, the Ministry of Forestry announced that a joint government, university, and NGO research team found hundreds of new species in Cendrawasih Bay and the Fak-Fak-Kaimana locality in Papua Province. Team leader Dr. Mark Erdmann noted that the team found at least 1,200 fish and 600 live corals, around 50% of which are apparently heretofore unidentified species and therefore new to the scientific world. The expedition included personnel from the Directorate General for Forest Protection and Nature Conservation, Conservation International Indonesia, University of Negeri Papua (UNIPA), the Office of Cendrawasih National Park, the Office of Natural Resources Conservation of Papua II, and the Worldwide Fund for Nature.

IOTWS Coastal Resilience Workshop

On September 12-13, the U.S. Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) program launched the Indonesian component of a regional Coastal Community Resilience initiative at a workshop jointly sponsored by the Indonesian Society for Disaster Management and International Federation of Red Cross/Indonesian Red Cross. Forty-five community representatives and disaster management specialists representing 35 different organizations participated. The program aimed to integrate disaster preparedness and coastal resources management into a single field guide for training across the region. Several international and Indonesian NGOs, donor organizations, GOI and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) representatives indicated they plan to use the guide in their disaster preparedness training efforts in coastal communities across Indonesia.

AFP Meeting in Yogyakarta

Indonesia hosted the Sixth AFP meeting on September 6-8 in Yogyakarta. Approximately 140 participants from the international donor community attended the

meeting. Topics of discussion covered illegal logging, forest and land fires, reforestation, and land rehabilitation. The Forest Faculty from Gajah Mada University proposed new reforestation in Gunung Kidul (located southwest of Yogyakarta). The US Government committed a \$20,000 grant for the program. Japan will host the seventh AFP meeting.

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